



“The Return Is Decreed”

Study: 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-2:70

Reading: 1 Samuel 14:36-46

Memory: Psalm 119:13

When I was a freshman in college, I would travel with some friends from school to an ice rink in town when the rink had “open skating.” There were some young teenage boys there who would be there for many of the skates. We would play tag and other games with these boys as we skated. There was one boy in particular who God laid on my heart and I began to pray for him and shared the gospel with him. Eventually, the skating season was done and I didn’t see this boy again. Over 25 years later, this boy sent me an email. I am not sure how he found me or even how he remembered my name, but what amazed me is how much of an affect I had on this boy, though I didn’t know about it for years. Today, we are going to see how God can use us when we are consistently faithful to Him.

What Does the Bible Say?

Sometime in the first year of the reign of Cyrus king of Persia, God caused Cyrus to issue a proclamation for the Jews to go back to Israel to start the rebuilding process. This was in keeping with what Jeremiah predicted would happen after 70 years. In this declaration, Cyrus gave credit to the God of heaven for allowing him to gain power. He understood that one of the reasons he had gained power was so that he could send Jews back to Israel to rebuild the temple. Any Jew who desired to do so was to be allowed to go back to Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding the temple. Those who chose to go back were to receive financial assistance from those around them to help them make the trip and to provide financially for the rebuilding effort (2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4).

God not only worked in the heart and mind of Cyrus to make this decree, but God also worked in the hearts of many of the Jews. Many of the family leaders heeded the call, along with priests and the Levites and prepared to go to Jerusalem. Collections were gathered from others who weren’t going to travel back and offerings were given to those who were making the journey. Cyrus contributed to this effort by giving the

returning Jews the items that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem. The amount of vessels was great and Sheshbazzar, who was one of the leaders of the Jews, was entrusted with taking these items back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:5-11).

Ezra 2 gave a list of all those who had been brought to Babylon, but chose to return to the land of Israel to start rebuilding the temple and restoring the Israelite presence in the land. Verse 2 gave a list of the leaders, two of which were Zerubbabel and Nehemiah which we will read about in the upcoming days. Zerubbabel was in the line of David through Jehioakim, and though he did not serve as king, he was one of the major influences in the building process (vs Ezra 2:1-2).

For devotional purposes, we will not look too closely into the lists of people that returned, but will look at a few interesting observations. Verse 59 described how there were men who decided to go to Israel, but they could not confirm they were descendants of Jacob. It is unclear how their records were lost, but with all the destruction and time that had passed, their lineage was unclear. The same was true of some of those who claimed they descended from priests. Their names were not found in the official records so they were ordered not to act as priests until they could consult the Urim and Thummin. The Urim and Thummin were talked about in Exodus and it is unknown exactly what they were. They were somehow used by the priests to help clarify God's direction when making some decisions (Ezra 2:3-70).

How Does this Apply to Me?

The approach of Cyrus towards the nation of Israel was completely different from that of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar declared how great he was and believed he was responsible for his kingdom until he experienced the humbling of God. Cyrus, when he took control, understood that he was given this ability by God. We are not told why Cyrus had this view. I have no way of proving this, but because of the relationship that Daniel and Cyrus had, I would assume that Daniel helped play a powerful role in shaping the mind of Cyrus when it came to prophecy and the Jewish people. Though being taken as a captive when he was young was not easy for Daniel, his choice to be faithful and consistent to God over the years made a powerful difference in the whole course of the land of Israel. When you are consistently faithful to God day in and day out, you never know how God will use that to impact the lives of those around you.

Ezra 1

What time frame are we given for this event (vs 1)?

What was being fulfilled (vs 1)?

What did God do (vs 1)?

What can you learn about the working of God from this?

What did the king put in writing (vs 1)?

What did Cyrus declare about his kingdom (vs 2)?

Why was this a powerful admission (vs 2)?

Why do you think this is important for all men to realize about their lives?

What did Cyrus know God wanted him to do (vs 2)?

What did Cyrus give the Jews permission to do (vs 3)?

Why do you think Cyrus had this view of God (vs 3)?

Who did Cyrus say should assist the Jews (vs 4)?

Why do you think it was important that Cyrus said this?

What caused the people to rise up and follow the command of Cyrus (vs 5)?

Why is the stirring of God so important?

What did people give to the cause (vs 6)?

What did Cyrus give (vs 7-8)?

Why do you think this was important?

“The Foundation Is Laid”

Study: Ezra 3:1-13

Reading: Titus 2:1-15

Memory: Psalm 119:13

When I first became a senior pastor, I pastored a church that was over 100 years old. Many of those attending grew up in the church and had experienced times of great blessing in the past. The church was much smaller when I first pastored than it had been in the “glory days.” One of my desires as a young pastor was to make the church much more enjoyable for younger people to be a part of which meant that some changes had to be made. I often faced opposition from older believers because I wasn’t doing things the way they used to do them and they wanted to relive the “glory days” of the church.

Today, we are going to see how some of the older Jews remembered the magnificence of the old temple and wept when the new one was being built because it was not what it used to be.

What Does the Bible Say?

The group of Israelites who volunteered to go back to Israel arrived in the land, but did not start the work on the temple right away. They began to get settled in and to work on their own lodgings and finding ways to survive. Though there were inhabitants who had moved into the land, the land was sparsely populated and had been desolate for many years. The Israelites were having to start all over again which would have been a difficult process. The leaders decided that they would start celebrating the prescribed feasts and the first one they celebrated was to take place in the seventh month of the year. In order to celebrate this feast, they needed to first rebuild the altar. This was so that they could start to offer their offerings to God as the Law of Moses had prescribed (vs 1-2).

As mentioned above, the area was not highly populated, but there were foreign inhabitants living in the land and these inhabitants did not want the Jews moving back. This caused tension and fear among those who were building and is probably one of the reason why they wanted to offer offerings. They wanted God’s favor and protecting hand. They

chose to keep the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) which commemorated the wandering of Israel in the wilderness. They followed the rules of this feast and continued to offer the daily sacrifices afterwards. Though they had offered offerings, they had not started work on the temple. Offerings that were given along with the provisions that Cyrus had sent with them were used to purchase materials for the temple. They ordered wood from Tyre and Sidon which was shipped to the port of Joppa and then transported to Jerusalem (vs 3-7).

Around seven months after the altar was built Zerubbabal and Jeshua appointed the priests and Levites who had returned to Israel to oversee the work of the building of the temple. The work began and when they had laid the foundation of the temple, they took time to celebrate. The sons of Asaph, who were the temple musicians, led the music as the people took time to praise and worship God. The key theme of their worship was the goodness and steadfast faithfulness of God. Though the people had failed God, God did not fail them. This was a time of great celebrating among the people (vs 8-11).

Not all those involved in this process shared the same excitement. Many of the older men, though thrilled to be back in Israel, were crying with sadness. It appears that many of these men were heartbroken over what had happened to the first temple and were also sad because this new temple wasn’t going to be close in splendor to that of the temple that Solomon originally built. Ezra recorded that many were shouting in celebration and many were mourning, but that no one could distinguish the difference (vs 12-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Was the weeping of the older men a good or bad thing? If they were weeping over their sin and the destruction it caused, it would be a good thing. If they were weeping because of the disappointment over this new structure not being as good as the old it was probably a bad thing. The older men had a great chance at this point to instill into the younger men the importance of following God’s way so that the new temple would not face the same fate as the old one. The older men also could have risked discouraging the younger men with a “not as good as it used to be” attitude. Scripture just states the fact that they mourned and does not give their intentions. Yet, it is very important for older believers to realize that they can have a profound effect on younger believers. This effect can be positive or negative.

What month did they decide to gather together in Jerusalem (vs 1)?

Who were the two leaders (vs 2)?

- 1.
- 2.

What did they want to follow (vs 2)?

What were the people afraid of (vs 3)?

What feast did they keep (vs 4)?

What does verse 5 reveal?

What had the people chosen to do (vs 6)?

What was not done at that time (vs 6)?

Who did they give money to (vs 7)? Why?

Why were they allowed to rebuild this temple (vs 7)?

When did they start building the temple (vs 8)?

Who was appointed to lead this effort (vs 8)?

Why do you think we are told who led this effort (vs 9)?

****The Israelites were concerned with doing things God's way as they attempted to restore their land.*

What happened when the foundation to the temple was laid (vs 10)?

What did they sing to God (vs 11)?

Why do you think this celebration and time of worship was important?

How did many of the older men respond (vs 12)? Why do you think they responded this way?

“The Power of Prayer”

Study: Daniel 10:1-21

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

Memory: Psalm 119:13

What Does the Bible Say?

Somewhere around the time that the Jews in Israel were rebuilding the temple. Daniel had another vision and he understood that this vision was about a time of great conflict and hardship that would come in the future. After this vision, Daniel began to pray and fast for three weeks. He refrained from eating any of the choice foods and also chose not to anoint himself with any oils. It appears that Daniel took himself out of his regular societal pattern, seeking an answer for this vision. Daniel was out by the Tigris river after three weeks and as he looked up he saw a man that was clothed in white linen with a belt of fine gold. This was no ordinary man and Daniel tried to describe his appearance the best that he could. Though there were people with Daniel, no one else saw this man. The people around Daniel could feel something was not right so they ran away and hid. Daniel was left alone with this supernatural presence which caused great fear to come over him. When the being began to talk, Daniel fainted and fell on his face (vs 1-9).

The next thing that Daniel remembered was a man touching him and helping him up off of his face to his hands and knees. Daniel heard a voice that told him that he was greatly loved by God. The man speaking had been sent by God with a message for Daniel. The man (probably the same being that caused him to faint) told Daniel to stand up, and he did with great fear and trembling. Daniel was told that he didn't need to fear because this was an answer to his prayer. As soon as Daniel began to pray three weeks before, God sent this messenger to Daniel. As he attempted to reach Daniel, he was intercepted by the prince of Persia. This caused him to be delayed until Michael, one of the lead angels, came to his aid to allow him to make his way to Daniel. This gives us a small glimpse into the spiritual warfare that goes on between the angels and the demons. It is assumed that the prince of Persia was a powerful demon who was given charge over the nation of Persia and he didn't want Daniel to hear this message (vs 10-13).

The messenger was sent to Daniel to help him understand what was

going to happen to the Israelites in the end times. After Daniel heard this he looked towards the ground and was unable to speak. There was someone there who looked like a man who came and touched his lips which helped give Daniel the ability to talk. (It is unclear if there was multiple messengers or just one.) Daniel's strength had left him because of the overwhelming visions he had seen. He felt completely unworthy and inadequate to be having these glorious visions (vs 14-17).

Once again, the one who looked like a man came and touched him, causing Daniel to be strengthened. He was told not to be afraid, but to be courageous. Daniel felt that he was strong enough to hear this news concerning the end times. The messenger asked if Daniel knew why he had come. Instead of answering or giving Daniel a chance to answer, he told Daniel that he needed to return to fight the prince of Persia and he also knew that once that was over, he would be fighting the prince of Greece. The messenger was sent to tell Daniel what God had declared. He also knew that there was still battle to be done with the evil forces (vs 18-21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

This is one of those passages in Scripture that has fascinated me because we are given information that is not mentioned many other places in Scripture. It is information that I cannot fully process, but it is also information that helps remind me that we are in a spiritual battle. When Daniel began to pray, a messenger was sent. Yet, he was hindered because of the spirit prince of Persia. How exactly it all works is unclear, but from Daniel's response to the vision and the presence on the river, we are reminded that though we also battle, the battle is not ours alone. We as humans, though we often think we are strong, have very little power. The power we have is the power of God, and from the life of Daniel we can see that true power is accessed through prayer. Though passages like this are hard to fully comprehend, one thing that is clear here and in many other passages of Scripture is that prayer is powerful.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you the access to Him through prayer.*
- * *Ask God to help you to understand the importance of prayer.*
- * *Praise God because He has power over any force of evil.*

What did Daniel understand about his vision (vs 1)?

What had Daniel done for three weeks (vs 2)?

What did he not do for three weeks (vs 3)?

What did Daniel see (vs 5)?

How did Daniel describe this person (vs 6)?

What was unique about this vision (vs 7)?

How did Daniel respond (vs 8)?

What happened when this man began to speak (vs 9)?

What happened in verse 10?

How did the messenger address Daniel (vs 11)?

What was Daniel told not to do (vs 12)?

When did the messenger say he was sent (vs 12)?

What happened over the last 21 days (vs 13)?

Who helped this messenger (vs 13)?

Why had he come to Daniel (vs 14)?

How did Daniel respond (vs 15)? Why?

What did Daniel say about the vision he had (vs 16)?

What did Daniel say about his strength (vs 17)?

How was Daniel strengthened (vs 18)?

Why had the messenger come (vs 19-21)?

“The North and South”

Study: Daniel 11:1-17

Reading: Galatians 4:1-7

Memory: Psalm 119:13

What Does the Bible Say?

After Daniel had a terrifying vision, he began to pray. Chapter 10 described how an angel was sent to him and in chapter 11 the angel told Daniel what the vision meant. The angel described how he had been given the task of strengthening Darius (Cyrus) the king of the Medes and Persians to conquer the nation of Babylon. Following Cyrus, there would be three more kings that would arise and the fourth king will be stronger than all of them. This king will want to conquer the region of Greece, but will fail. History records that these kings were Cambyses (530–522 B.C.), Psuedo-Smerdis (522 B.C.), and Darius I Hystaspes (522–486 B.C.). The fourth is Xerxes I, called Ahasuerus in Esther (486–465 B.C.) Though there were more kings of Persia after Xerxes, they are not mentioned because those failed attempts began the downfall of the Persian empire, though they lasted for several more years (vs 1-2).

The mighty king mentioned in verse 3 was the first king of the Greek empire, Alexander the Great. He conquered with incredible swiftness, but only ruled for 12 years. He did not have any heirs, so his kingdom was divided among four of his generals. They would not have the power that Alexander obtained, and would end up fighting with each other. The southern kingdom of the Greek empire, mainly Egypt, was ruled by the Ptolomies. The northern kingdom, the large area of Babylon, Persia and modern day Turkey was ruled by the Seleucids. Ptolemy and Seleucus were generals under Alexander. The stronger one referred to at that time was Seleucus (vs 3-5).

After some years had passed, an alliance would be formed between the Ptolemies and Seleucids. One of the Ptolemy daughters, Berenice, would marry Antiochus the II who reigned from 261-246 B.C. History records that Antiochus divorced his wife to marry Berenice, but that the divorced wife killed Berenice by poisoning her. This caused the alliance to fall apart. Ptolemy III Euergetes, the brother of Berenice, set out to avenge the death of his sister when he became ruler. He was victorious over the Seleucids and brought back a great amount of treasure with him

to Egypt. After that point, there would be relative peace between the fighting factions (vs 6-8).

After some time, the Seleucids would choose to raid the regions that were controlled by the Ptolemies. The leader mentioned in verse 9 was most likely Callinicus who attacked Egypt’s properties around 240 B.C., but his attempt to conquer Egypt failed. Seleucus III and Antiochus III, generals who followed Callinicus, kept up their attacks on the Ptolemies land and Aniochus III succeeded in conquering the Ptolemies land down to the southern borders of Israel (vs 9-10).

This did not set well with Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–203 B.C.) Who rallied a large force of his men and pushed back the forces of Antiochus III. He was initially successful and this success caused him to swell up with pride, but that pride caused his downfall. He chose to have thousands of his enemies killed which enraged Antiochus III. Antiochus III returned with a much larger army and reconquered the land he had lost. What does make all of this significant for Israel is that many of these battles between the north and the south would have taken place in the land of Israel. This would mean that the possession of the land was constantly switching between the northern and southern kingdoms of the Greek empire (vs 11-13).

The Egyptian kingdom was oppressive to the Jews and others they conquered. Some Jews banded together with others to fight Egyptian control, but were unsuccessful. Philip V, ruler of the Greek region of Macedonia, joined with Antiochus III to fight against Egypt around 203 B.C. They would conquer a city by laying siege to it according to verse 15. This is most likely the city of Sidon which was under the control of the Ptolemies. Antiochus III would have great power and would take control of the land of Israel (the glorious land). He would try to make a peace treaty with the southern kingdom of Egypt by giving the king his daughter in marriage. This peace did not succeed (vs 14-18).

How Does this Apply to Me?

At the end of the book of Malachi, there is around a 400 year gap which is often referred to as the “400 Silent Years.” Though there is no history recorded in the Bible from these years, this prophecy is given concerning those years. Though Israel wouldn’t do much fighting, they will not be allowed to succeed as a nation. This was all setting up the scene for the entrance of the Messiah. For that to happen, everything had to follow God’s plan.

What did the messenger say he had done (vs 1)?

What was going to happen in the Persian empire (vs 2)?

Who was the mighty king prophesied in verse 3?

What happened to this king (vs 4)?

Why was it not given to his posterity (vs 4)?

What two regions are dealt with in much of this passage (vs 5)?

What will they try to do (vs 6)?

What would this leader be able to do (vs 7)?

What was he going to take (vs 8)?

What will the leader of the north attempt to do (vs 9)?

What will the sons of the northern leader do (vs 10)?

What will the king of the south be able to do (vs 11)?

What will happen when he is victorious (vs 12)?

What will he do with thousands of his enemies (vs 12)?

What eventually will happen (vs 12-13)?

Who will try to rebel against the south (vs 14)?

What will the king of the north do (vs 15)?

What will this king be allowed to do (vs 16)?

What will he attempt to do (vs 17)?

Why do you think all of this will be difficult for Israel?

“The Jews Still Stand”

Study: Daniel 11:18-35

Reading: Ester 8:1-9:32

Memory: Psalm 119:13

What Does the Bible Say?

Yesterday, we read about the constant battles among the Greek empire. We left off with Antiochus III around 200 B.C. He was able to push the Ptolemies out of Israel and the surrounding regions and set out to conquer the coast lands along the Mediterranean in the modern day region of Turkey. He was able to be victorious over many of them. It was at this time, around 190 B.C., that the Roman power started to grow.

The Roman commander, Cornelius Scipio, led his army against Antiochus and turned him back. Antiochus headed home after defeat, attempting to regain control of some of the cities in his own territory when he was killed (vs 18-19).

As the Romans rose to power, they started taking cities that were once controlled by the Seleucids. Seleucus IV, who took over after Antiochus III, was forced to pay tribute to Rome if he wanted to keep possession of certain regions. He heavily taxed his people to pay this tribute, but this did not go over well. He was poisoned by his treasurer and died around 176 B.C. (vs 20)

Following Seleucus IV was Antiochus IV Epiphenes. This is the little horn that was seen in the vision recorded in chapter 8. Though he wasn't the first in line to be heir to the throne, by force and flattery he took control of the kingdom. He was described in the vision as a "contemptible person" (ESV) indicating the type of great wickedness he would display during his reign. He would be a powerful leader with the power to sweep away the Egyptian opposition. He also removed Onias III from his position as high priest of Israel (the prince of the covenant). This was most likely because Onias III was opposed to the rule of Antiochus (vs 21-22).

Once Antiochus had gained power, he attempted to gain favor with the "small people." He chose to take from the wealthy parts of the land and redistribute it to the poorer parts to gain their favor and support. With this support he chose to fight Egypt. He led a large force against Egypt who also countered with a large force. Antiochus was victorious, but

used diplomacy to gain greater control rather than by fighting. He made a treaty with the king of the south, but this treaty was not kept because both leaders were attempting to out deceive the other (vs 23-27).

Though this treaty with Egypt failed, he was able to obtain great riches in the process. On the way back to his homeland, Antiochus traveled through Israel and set his heart against the Jews. He did some damage to the temple and killed over 80,000 men. He also took over 40,000 prisoners that he sold as slaves. It is unclear why Antiochus had such a hatred for the Jewish people, but that hatred was nothing new and still exists today (vs 28).

Antiochus would once again attempt to invade Egypt, but it would be different this time. This time, Rome would assist Egypt by sending their warships full of men to do battle. This would cause great fear in Antiochus and he chose to abandon his war effort. He was extremely frustrated by this event and took that frustration and anger out on the land of Israel. He chose to halt all worship in the temple and it was at this time that his forces would offer a pig on the altar at the temple. He wanted the Jews to give up their religion and convert to the Greek practices. He thought that if he defiled their temple, they would convert. The Greeks offered to reward any of the Jews who voluntarily gave up their religion, and though some gave into this, there were many Jews who stood firm in their faith. Those who were faithful to God were called "Hasideans" and it was at this time that Judah Maccabeus lead a revolt against the Greeks around 164 B.C. They did receive some help from Rome to lead this rebellion, but many Jews lost their lives fighting for their temple. They understood that they had a greater hope beyond this life and that this persecution was refining them (vs 29-35).

How Does this Apply to Me?

One of the great proofs that the God of Israel is real and that the Bible is truth comes from the continued existence of the Jewish people. Nation after nation attempted to assimilate the Israelite nation into their cultures. Antiochus did all he could to cause the Jews to give up their faith, yet they were willing to die for what they believed and for their Jewish heritage. Once again, the Jews survived this attempt of annihilation and were delivered by God. The nations and leaders that have attempted to remove the Jews have come and gone, yet the Jewish people are still here. That fact that the nation of Israel exists at all is a miraculous act that could only be accomplished by supernatural power.

What will Antiochus the third set his eyes on (vs 18)?

What would happen to him (vs 19)?

How is the next ruler described (vs 20)?

What will happen to him (vs 20)?

How is the next leader (Antiochus IV Epiphenes) described (s 21)?

How is his power described (vs 22)?

What will he do in an attempt to make an alliance with the south (vs 23)?

What will he do with the wealthy regions of the land (vs 24)?

What will he stir up (vs 25)?

Who will not succeed (vs 25)?

What will happen to his army (vs 26)?

Why will the attempt at peace fail (vs 27)?

What does this reveal about human nature?

What will Antiochus do on his return to his homeland (vs 28)?

What will be different about his next attack (vs 29-30)?

How will he respond (vs 30)?

What will his forces do (vs 31)?

What will Antiochus attempt to do (vs 32)?

What will be the result (vs 33-34)?

What does verse 35 reveal about difficult times?

“The God of Power”

Study: Daniel 11:36-45

Reading: Revelation 19:11-21, Matthew 24:15-28

Memory: Psalm 119:13

When my children were little, I used to let them sit on my lap and drive when we were on the back roads. They would put their tiny hands on top of the steering wheel and often would feel they were really driving. They had no fear of getting into an accident or what could have happened if they did the wrong thing because they ultimately knew that my hand was on the bottom of the steering wheel and that I was the one controlling the pedals.

Today, we will read how we can go through this life without living in fear because we can trust that God’s hand is on the steering wheel of this world.

What Does the Bible Say?

It appears that verse 36 takes a big jump from the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphenes to the actions of the Anti-christ. We do know that some of the actions of the Anti-christ will parallel some of the actions of Antiochus, but many of the things described in the next several verses have no historical record that points to Antiochus. The king referred to in verse 37 will do as he pleases, exalting himself far above any other gods. We read in Daniel 8 how the little horn that grew was constantly praising himself and that appeared to be a picture of the Anti-Christ. He will speak things against the God of Israel that will astonish all those who hear. This self exaltation will cause him to prosper until the time for his destruction comes. This king will not worship any gods of his fathers or the beloved gods of the land, but instead will exalt himself as a god. He will worship the god of the fortresses. This is most likely not a reference to an actual God, but the worship of his own power and ability. He will spend all of his money to obtain this power as he will worship power and reverence above all else (vs 36-38).

The Anti-christ will associate with others who have great power and those who choose to come along side of him will be showered with honor and blessings. He will give these people positions of authority because

they highly exalted him or they paid for a position of leadership (vs 39).

When the time of the end has come, there will be a strong force come from the south and a strong force will attack from the north, meeting that Anti-christ in the land of Israel. Many will be killed in the land, but the Anti-christ will prevail against both forces. The nations of Moab, Edom and most of Ammon will escape this destruction and will probably be a place where many Israelites will flee. The Anti-christ will gain riches from this victory and will have rule over the land of Egypt (vs 40-43).

After these victories, he will hear alarming reports from the north and the east and will come back from Egypt to face the latest threats. He will pitch his royal tents between the sea (most likely the Mediterranean) and the “glorious holy mountain,” which is probably a reference to Jerusalem. It is probably at this time where he will act as a type of Christ and establish a one world religion. Verse 45 says it is there where he will come to an end (vs 44-45).

There has been great time and effort put into studying this passage and putting it together with other passages about prophecy. This has led to a variety of thoughts about this passage and the exact meaning of each detail. It is very tough to give a distinct meaning because many of the references are a vague overview of what will take place. This passage was not meant to give a detailed account of all the events of the end times. Tomorrow, we will look at a slightly more detailed account of end times events.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Studying the end times can be a very interesting study and it is also a study that can produce a great amount of fear if a person isn’t careful. It is important to understand that God had no intention of increasing fear by revealing these events to Daniel and others. Most of the messengers who delivered them declared, “Fear not.” The messages about the end times were full of destruction, but were also full of hope. The great hope that all believers have is that this wicked world as we know it will come to an end, allowing the new kingdom and eventually the new heavens and new earth to be ushered in. Not only can you have hope for the future, but you can have hope for today knowing that God has always been in control and will be in control until the end.

Thought for the day

What will the king do (vs 36)?

What position will he put himself in (vs 36)?

Who will he speak against (vs 36)?

How can you see this type of personality popular in our day?

Why will he be allowed to prosper (vs 36)?

What will he not pay attention to (vs 37)?

Why won't he pay attention to these other gods (vs 37)?

What god will he honor (vs 38)?

****The god of his own power.*

What is one thing he will do to obtain this power (vs 38)?

What will this power enable him to do (vs 39)?

****Attack other strong powers and be victorious.*

Who will he give honor to (vs 39)?

How will others become rulers (vs 39)?

Where will the attacks on the Anti-christ come from (vs 40)?

What will happen in the land of Israel (vs 41)?

What will he do to the countries who attacked (vs 42)?

How will this conquest boost his kingdom (vs 43)?

What will cause him to act (vs 44)?

Where will he pitch his tent for his final battles (vs 45)?

Memory Verse:

Psalms 119:1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, 3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! 4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. 5 Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! 6 Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. 7 I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. 8 I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me! 9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. 10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! 11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. 12 Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! 13 With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.